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## Ukrainians, Belarusians and Kazakhs

### Profile

According to the 2002 national census, there are 2,942,961 Ukrainians, 807,970 Belarusians and 653,962 Kazakhs in the Russian Federation.

### Historical context

The collapse of the Soviet Union presented a number of groups in the RF with a particular dilemma. The large Ukrainian, Belarusian and Kazakh communities in the RF now had independent 'homelands' outside Russia. The Russian Government has given little support to the revival of indigenous language and cultures among these diaspora populations. Instead, each community is expected to fund its own development. This situation is reflected in the significant fall in numbers for Ukrainians and Belarusians due to out-migration to newly independent ethnic homelands. Ukrainians accounted for 4.4 million people in 1989, but now account for only 3 million. Only Kazakhs have increased their population since 1989.

A Congress of Russian Ukrainians has been formed, which meets annually.

For both Ukrainians and Kazakhs in Russia, their relationship to the Russian state is mediated by the reciprocal relationship of their respective ethnic homelands with their own sizeable Russian minorities. In 1995 Russia proposed a dual citizenship model for ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan, a proposal rejected by the Kazakhstani government. Instead the two governments signed a 'Simple Exchange Agreement', allowing Russians in Kazakhstan and Kazakhs in Russia to switch citizenship through a simplified three-month procedure. In 1998 Russia and Kazakhstan concluded a bilateral treaty on the protection of Russians in Kazakhstan and Kazakhs in Russia.

### Current issues

Diaspora groups in Russia voiced concerns in 2005 that the lack of a legal basis for their organizations impedes the successful promotion of their national cultures. Ukrainian diaspora groups also criticized the government of Ukraine for failing to adequately support diaspora activities in Russia.

There are reportedly only seven secondary schools in Russia (in Moscow, Bashkortostan and Tomsk region) offering Ukrainian language courses over a range of years to constitute a full educational programme. Another five reportedly offer Ukrainian as an optional subject. Ukrainians in diaspora groups expressed dissatisfaction at this level of supply of Ukrainian-medium tuition, given that Ukrainians form the second largest diaspora in Russia after Tatars.